Material Eucharist

5

Death and Resurrection

In the Eucharist, the person who receives the bread and wine becomes part of the body of Christ. In chapter 4, it was seen that this much is accepted in both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. In that chapter it soon became apparent, however, that as early as the New Testament era, the theological account of precisely how this bodily assimilation occurred played a vital role in the defence of this striking notion. The body of Christ that came into view was, specifically, the fleshly body. From the earliest Christian times, merely communal understandings of the eucharistic body have, in contrast, been recognized as inadequate. It is not simply the Church that is the body of Christ. Rather, when receiving the Eucharist, the individual communicant enters into a participation in Christ's body that is fleshly. The flesh of Christ enters into her own flesh, which is, in turn, received into his. Such mutual participation has rightly been interpreted as a foretaste of the resurrection. Irenaeus of Lyons, writing in the later second century, affirms: 'For as the bread, which is provided from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope [*spes*] of their resurrection to eternity.'[1] Because the Eucharist is both earthly and heavenly, the earthly body, upon receiving it, gains a share in the resurrection life of heaven.

Nevertheless, this share remains, in the words of Irenaeus, a hope. Upon receiving the Eucharist, the communicant does not become endowed with an indestructible body, nor is she granted immediate admittance into heaven. The person who has been assimilated into Christ's flesh, even into his resurrection flesh, will still die. This paradox was in the minds of the church members in Thessalonika, to whom Paul responded by letter: if Christians have become incorporated into a resurrection body, why do they die according to the same physical process as people who are not members of this body?[2] In his reply, Paul recognizes the difficulty of the question, beginning by referring not to the dead but to those who are asleep (*koimomenon*). However, he is less circumspect in the verse that follows, when acknowledging that Christ is dead (*apethane*) but also risen. Only through the death and

[1] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.18.5, in *ANF* 1.486.

[2] 1 Thes. 4.13-14.

resurrection of Christ, Paul suggests, may the death and future resurrection of believers be understood. He realizes that, before even Christ could be resurrected, he had to die. Even though Christians, on receiving the Eucharist, enter into his resurrection life, this life is not immediately available in its fullness. Christ has already conquered death and has been resurrected, thus removing the victory (*nikos*) and sting (*ketron*) of death. Nonetheless, the resurrection of his followers remains a future hope, which, like Christ's own, can be attained only in death.

All this suggests that the resurrection makes sense only through death. From this perspective, it increases the importance of death, rather than rendering death insignificant. This is why Christians make preparations for death, including distinctive eucharistic preparations. Among these are the reception of the Eucharist by believers close to death, the celebration of the Eucharist upon the tombs of believers who have died, and the burial of believers in close proximity to altars, upon which the Eucharist is celebrated. Such practices have juxtaposed dying and dead bodies with the Eucharist, establishing a degree of physical solidarity between perishable human bodies and Christ's resurrected body. In a striking phrase, the writer to the Hebrews describes the life of that body as indestructible (*akatalytou*).[3]

The close juxtaposition to the dead, which came so early to characterize Christian worship, was, from both Jewish and pagan perspectives, deeply disturbing.[4] In these other religious cultures, dead bodies were viewed as unclean and were buried away from sites of worship. In this chapter, however, it will be shown that practices surrounding death and burial, as well as their theological interpretation, have been fundamental in the development of eucharistic theology and liturgy. In chapter 5.1, the ancient practice of giving of communion to the dying will be examined. This will be followed, in chapter 5.2, by an exposition of burial practices, including of Eucharists celebrated at gravesides, then in chapter 5.3 the close association of the altar with burial and resurrection will be expounded. All will be seen to be grounded in the strong belief in Christ's resurrection life. In chapter 5.4, the focus will move to the eucharistic representation of this life, and especially to the role of the Spirit as its cause. Conceptions of the Spirit's role in the life of Christ, and especially

[3] Heb. 7.16.

[4] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, new ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1–22.

in his resurrection, will be surveyed, along with the rich range of possibilities in Syrian liturgical and biblical exegesis. I shall then examine, in chapter 5.5, the revival of eucharistic pneumatology during the second half of the twentieth century, and the range of ways in which, in the Eucharist, the power of the Spirit may be represented.

5.1. Viaticum

Although a person who is close to death might wish to receive the eucharistic host, practical factors might mitigate against this. Most obviously, the time of death often cannot be predicted, and is sometimes sudden. The dying person might not be fully conscious or aware of their surroundings. A priest might not be available to administer the sacrament. Nevertheless, in Christian practice a clear pastoral imperative to make the Eucharist available to prepare the dying for their death, and to strengthen them in their passage into death, has consistently been recognized. This ministry is known as the viaticum, which is simply the reception of the Eucharist by Christians close to death. Excepting the full celebration of the Eucharist, it is probably the most ancient eucharistic practice. From at least the early third century, the reception of the host features prominently in accounts of the deaths of saintly figures. The Council of Trent suggested, in 1551, that the viaticum was the original reason for the reservation of the host. The assembled bishops justified this view by reference to the very first ecumenical council in Nicaea in 325, stating that the 'practice of carrying the holy Eucharist to the sick, and hence its careful reservation for that purpose in the churches, is not only consonant with right and proper understanding, but can be shown to be enjoined in many councils, and has been observed by long-standing custom of the catholic church'.[5] The Council of Nicaea had itself cited ancient precedent on this point: 'Concerning the departing, the ancient canon law is still to be maintained, namely that those who are departing are not to be deprived of their last, most necessary viaticum.'[6]

To receive the host at the very end of life sealed a holy life, and opened the way to a holy death, in which the departing person was reconciled with themselves and with their community. When ingesting the host at the point of death, Christians were able to assimilate their dying bodies into Christ's resurrected body, and so begin the transition from a decaying

[5] Council of Trent, session 13, in *DEC* 2.696

[6] First Council of Nicaea, canon 13, in *DEC* 1.12.

earthly life into an indestructible resurrection life. Relating the death and hoped-for resurrection of the human body to the processes of decay and rebirth undergone by the eucharistic elements, which were discussed in chapters 1.1 and 1.2, Irenaeus of Lyons writes:

> Just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption.[7]

Irenaeus, being bishop of a city where many Christians had already been martyred, had good cause to reflect on what made a faithful death. In the passage just quoted, he situates this within a larger, divinely governed theological cosmology of birth, growth, death, rest, and rebirth that encompasses the vine, crops, the Eucharist, Christ, and human bodies. At this point, the dominant hierarchy of death and life is inverted, as the power of death is seen to be overcome by divine power. As Paul writes to the Corinthians, what is mortal is 'swallowed up [*katapino*] by life'.[8] This image is itself eucharistically suggestive, evoking the consumption of the host by its recipient.

The antiquity of the Christian practice of viaticum is undoubtedly significant for understanding the fundamental role of the Eucharist in shaping Christian ecclesiology. It is from this pastoral context of the Eucharist, deeply rooted in lay practice, that any eucharistic ecclesiology must begin. Doctrinally, by associating the Eucharist primarily with the death and resurrection of Christ, and with the death and resurrection of believers in him, it situates

[7] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.2.3, trans. Alexander Roberts and W.H. Rambaut, in *ANF* 1.528.

[8] 2 Cor. 5.4.

ecclesiology within a theological landscape of ultimate questions. The Eucharist is, literally, a matter of life and death, the 'last supper' of believers just as it was the Last Supper of Christ.[9]

Once the centrality of the viaticum is recognized, certain suppositions about eucharistic practice are called into question. In some ancient accounts, the imperative to administer the viaticum to the dying trumps the normal requirement that eucharistic administration be restricted to priests. The right to administer the viaticum was sometimes extended to deacons and subdeacons.[10] In others contexts, however, it was accepted that anybody could administer the host to the dying. This is shown in a story told to Eusebius of Caesarea by the Coptic Pope Dionysius of Alexandria (d. 265). An elderly Christian man named Serapion, who had offered a pagan sacrifice during persecution, had been shunned by fellow church members. As he lay in his bed at night on the point of death, Serapion summoned his grandson to him, sending the boy to fetch the priest in order that he might receive the viaticum. However, the priest was sick and therefore unable to attend. Nevertheless, he provided the boy with a small portion of the host, instructing him to soak it before giving it to his grandfather. The boy returned, soaked the host, and dropped it into the mouth of his grandfather, who swallowed it before dying.[11] Eusebius, who was a bishop, does not present this ministry as in any way inappropriate; on the contrary, he praises it as a striking act of piety. Through the reception of communion, he suggests, the aged Serapion received absolution from his sins. Moreover, as a result of the reconciliation that the viaticum effected, Eusebius adds, Serapion could be credited with the many good acts that had performed over the course of his life. In other accounts, the viaticum is administered by women. From an ecclesiological perspective, this is perhaps even more striking, although unsurprising when one considers, in historical perspective, women's role as pastoral care givers. One such account is from Gerontius, a monk of the monastery of Melania the Younger in Jerusalem. While in Constantinople, Melania sat through the night with her uncle,

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[9] Ulrich Volp, *Tod und Ritual in den christlichen Gemeinden der Antike* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 166–72.

[10] Bert Wirix, 'The viaticum', in *Bread of Heaven: Customs and Practices surrounding Holy Communion: Essays in the History of Liturgy and Culture*, eds Charles Caspers, Gerard Lukken, and Gerard Rouwhorst (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 247–59.

[11] Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* 6.44, trans. G.A. Williamson, ed. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1989), 218. The host was soaked to soften it and make it easier to consume.

a former city prefect, as he lay dying. Just before his death at dawn, she gave him the eucharistic bread.[12] Pope Gregory the Great recounts a similar episode in which Redempta gave the viaticum to her paralyzed sister Romula, who, as she died, heard and saw the angelic choir.[13]

Eusebius's detailed account of the death of Serapion leaves unclear the precise relationship between the viaticum and repentance. Although an interior mental act of contrition might have accompanied Serapion's physical reception of the host, strong emphasis is placed upon the host itself constituting a bond of reconciliation for the dying, rather than such reconciliation following a prior act of confession and absolution. Assuming that an interior mental act indeed occurred, even if the host did not by itself provide everything needful for reconciliation, it nevertheless conveyed the absolution that sealed such reconciliation. Yet the practice of deathbed eucharistic reconciliation was contested, with early controversy focusing on the participation in the Eucharist by lapsed Christians in Africa in the aftermath of the Diocletian persecution. Cyprian of Carthage, which was the metropolitan see of Hippo, where Augustine would later become bishop, contested in strong terms the willingness to make the host freely available. Himself martyred in 258, during the Valerian persecution, Cyprian protests in a letter to his clergy that the lapsed 'join in communion with the fallen, they make the offering and to them they give the Eucharist'. In so doing, the lapsed sweep aside the 'respect which the blessed martyrs . . . reserve for us, with nothing but scorn for the law and ordinance of the Lord, which these same martyrs and confessors enjoin should be kept'. The lapsed receive the Eucharist, Cyprian adds, 'practically before the martyrs even breathe their last'.[14] Against this inclusivity, he cites Paul: whoever eats or drinks unworthily will be answerable to God.[15]

At the Synod of Elvira in Spain (305/6), the giving of the viaticum to the lapsed was a dominating issue. The Synod's first canon prohibited the practice: 'If an adult who has been baptized has entered an idol's temple, [or] has committed a capital crime, he cannot be received into communion, even at the end of his life.'[16] It is noteworthy that criminality is

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[12] *The Life of Melania, the Younger* 55, trans. Elizabeth A. Clark (New York: Mellen, 1984), 68.

[13] *DSGG* 4 (16), 210.

[14] *Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* 16.2-3, trans. G.W. Clarke, 4 vols (New York: Newman, 1984−9), 1.94–5.

[15] 1 Cor. 11.27.

[16] *HCC* 1.138.

here grounds for exclusion, as well as apostasy. Subsequently, however, whenever the issue was debated the opposite conclusion was consistently reached: that the viaticum should in fact be granted to the lapsed. The Synod of Ancyra (314) permitted this even if the process of readmission into the Church was in progress but not completed. At the end of the century after Cyprian had written, a synod at Carthage (398) instructed that penitent apostates were entitled to receive the viaticum. Pope Siricius made clear that this right extended even to Manichaens held in monastic imprisonment under a strict regimen of fasting and prayer, who were on no account to receive communion in any other circumstance. A synod at Orange (441) made the viaticum available to unreconciled penitents. A synod at Agde (506) decreed, even more boldly, that no-one near death be refused viaticum, and this was reaffirmed by a synod at Lerida (524) with regard to unreconciled clerics. In other words, even those who had not embarked on a path of reconciliation before their death were not to be excluded. The first Synod of Reims (*c.* 625) taught that a murderer, although he be out of communion with the church, must not be denied the viaticum, and a synod at Toledo (694) issued a similar direction for excommunicated priests.[17]

Cyprian's own protest was against the lapsed participating in the eucharistic assembly, with the viaticum being viewed as an extension of this. Nevertheless, the viaticum was the form in which the lapsed were most likely to receive communion, and Cyprian permitted no exceptions. He highlights a real theological difficulty with extending viaticum to the lapsed. Being eucharistic, it expresses the unity of the whole Church, both earthly and heavenly, and is part of the Eucharist that has been offered with the prayers of that whole Church, including its martyrs. In tension with Cyprian's primarily ecclesiological concern, however, is the imperative of responding to the pastoral needs of the dying. In the background, there seems to be a theology of ultimately universal salvation: individual Christians, and even the Church collectively, will not be saved in separation from the remainder of humanity. It is clear that, in the debate surrounding the viaticum, these pastoral and doctrinal concerns came to trump ecclesiological arguments. Nevertheless, the fact that the issue attracted the attention of so many synods across such a wide geographical area and time period suggests that the imperative that the viaticum be made available to all needed to

[17] See the documents in *HCC* 1.207–8 (canon 6); 2.416 (canons 76-8); 3.160 (canon 3); 4.79 (canon 15), 134 (canon 5), 446 (canon 9); 5.247 (canon 5); *The Book of Pontiffs* 40, trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool University Press, 1989), 30.

be restated regularly, against those who would withhold it in an attempt to maintain ecclesiastical purity.

Some less controversial viatical narratives will shed further light upon the significance of the Eucharist at the time of death. For Ambrose (d. 397), who was the bishop of Milan, receiving the viaticum was the key moment in his passage to a good death, as beautifully narrated by the deacon Paulinus. On the day of his death, Ambrose prayed from the late afternoon with arms outstretched in the shape of a cross. As the hour of his death drew near, he called upstairs to the bishop Honoratius. Paulinus states that Honoratius 'went down and offered the holy man the Body of the Lord, which he received, and, as soon as he had swallowed it, he breathed forth his spirit, bearing with him a good Viaticum, so that his soul, more refreshed by this Food, now rejoices in the company of angels according to whose life he lived on earth'.[18] Ambrose's body was then carried to the church in which the Easter vigil was to take place, resting there on view until Easter morning.

The monastic founder Benedict (d. *c.* 547) also planned his death around the viaticum, although the events take a different order. His biographer, Pope Gregory the Great, describes how Benedict foretold his death date to several of his monastic brothers, whom he swore to secrecy. Six days before the predicted date, he instructed that his tomb be opened, after which he was seized with a debilitating fever. Gregory continues the story: 'Each day his condition grew worse until finally, on the sixth day, he had his disciples carry him into the chapel, where he received the Body and Blood of our Lord to gain strength for his approaching end. Then, supporting his weakened body on the arms of his brethren, he stood with his hands raised to heaven and as he prayed breathed his last.'[19] Brendan of Clonfert's death (577) was also prepared by the viaticum. A contemporary of Benedict, Brendan was also a monastic founder, as well as, according to legend, an intrepid traveller. The account of his epic voyage in which he reached the Isle of the Blessed concludes with him receiving the eucharistic host. The anonymous author relates that Brendan, 'fortified with the sacraments of the Church, lay back in the arms of his disciples and gave up his illustrious spirit to the Lord'.[20] Brendan's earthly journey thereby transmutes into a spiritual voyage into death.

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[18] Paulinus, *Life of St Ambrose* 47, trans. John A. Lacy, in *Early Christian Biographies* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1952), 25–66 (62).

[19] *DSGG* 2 (37), 107–8.

[20] *The Voyage of St Brendan* 29, in *The Age of Bede*, trans. J.F. Webb (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 231–67 (245).

A further set of accounts comes from the lives of British saints of the late seventh century, which are recorded by Bede. Hilda, the abbess of Whitby (d. 680), receives the viaticum around dawn, before summoning her community to her and urging them to maintain the peace of the gospel. She then welcomes death joyously.[21] Caedmon, the monk and poet also of Whitby (d. *c.* 680), takes the host into his hands and makes peace with every member of his community. They assure him of their peace, then each in turn asks him to clear from his heart any bitterness towards them. Caedmon then 'fortified himself with the heavenly Viaticum' and passed away, shortly before the singing of matins.[22] Cuthbert (d. 687), who two years earlier had been consecrated bishop of Lindisfarne, suffered from a painful illness as his death approached. On the day of his death he went to lie in a corner of his hermitage chapel, opposite the altar. The abbot Herefrith, who had come with some of the brothers to be with Cuthbert, sat with him through the evening. Then, Bede has Herefrith relate: 'At the usual time for night prayer I gave him the sacraments that lead to eternal life. Thus fortified with the Lord's Body and Blood in preparation for the death he knew was now at hand, he raised his eyes heavenwards, stretched out his arms aloft, and with his mind rapt in the praise of the Lord sent forth his spirit to the bliss of Paradise.'[23] The abbot then goes outside to report Cuthbert's death to the brothers, who are chanting lauds. Cuthbert was later buried on the spot where he had died, on the right-hand side of the altar in a stone coffin. Finally, the bedridden abbot Benedict Biscop (d. 690), who founded the monasteries at both Wearmouth and Jarrow, died in his cell, again as described by Bede: 'The sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord was brought as viaticum for his journey when the hour of death was at hand. And so that holy soul, which had been tested and perfected by the burning pain of long but profitable suffering, left this earthly furnace of the flesh and, free at last, took wing to the glory of eternal bliss.'[24]

A final account may be added of the death of Dunstan of Canterbury (d. 988). Early on the Saturday morning of the octave of the Ascension, after matins, the Archbishop asked the brothers to assemble. His chronicler writes that Dunstan 'again commended his spirit to them, and took from the heavenly table the viaticum of the sacraments of Christ which had

[21] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* 4.23, trans. Leo Sherley-Price with R.E. Latham (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 246.

[22] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.24, 250.

[23] Bede, *Life of Cuthbert* 39, in *Age of Bede*, 41–104 (95).

[24] Bede, *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow* 14, in *Age*, 185–210 (199).

been celebrated in his presence. The assembled company then sang from the Psalms, after which Dunstan "gave up his spirit into the hands of his Creator and rested in peace".'[25] Adelard's use of Christ's final words from the cross in Luke's gospel amplifies the theological setting of Dunstan's final moments of earthly life, which is provided by the liturgical calendar. By falling on the eve of the final Sunday of the Easter season and within the Ascension octave, Dunstan's death is associated both with the overcoming of death achieved by Christ at the resurrection, and with Christ's passage into heaven to the right hand of the Father to reign in glory.

These *Lives* are hagiographical, perhaps above all when reporting their subject's death. Moreover, those by Bede are set within the Gregorian literary tradition, emulating the *Life of Benedict* in particular, which, as has been seen, culminates in its subject receiving the viaticum.[26] The *Lives* nevertheless reveal, across six centuries, an understanding of death that is intensely eucharistic. The deaths of Benedict and Cuthbert occur in a chapel, and Cuthbert finds his repose close to the altar. Prior to their deaths, Ambrose and Benedict each pray for an extended period, with arms raised or outstretched, recalling postures adopted by the priest during the eucharistic prayer. In several of the accounts, the viaticum confirms a community of friendship around the dying person.[27] The dimension of reconciliation that forms part of this becomes explicit at the deaths of Hilda and Caedmon. In the case of Caedmon, as has been seen, this reconciliation is given added power when he makes peace with his brothers around him while bearing the host in his hands. In the background of this viatical peacemaking are undoubtedly the conflicts following the Synod of Whitby over whether the Anglo-Saxon church should adopt Celtic or Roman practices on matters such as the calculation of the date of Easter. Reflecting further on the narrative, it is noteworthy that the deaths of Ambrose, Caedmon, and Cuthbert are followed shortly after by singing: with Ambrose, the chanting of the Easter vigil, and with Caedmon and Cuthbert, the singing of the night office by their brethren. Suggestive of the praise of angels ushering the departed soul

[25] Adelard of Ghent, 'Lections for the Deposition of St Dunstan' 11, in *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, trans. Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge (Oxford: Clarendon, 2012), 141; see Lk. 23.46.

[26] Alan Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 130–53.

[27] See also the brief accounts of the deaths of Abbot Spes and Brother John, in *DSGG* 4 (11, 36), 203, 233–4.

heavenward, this evokes the mingling of earthly and heavenly praise in the *Sanctus*, which was discussed in chapter 2.2. In the case of Ambrose, his death just before Easter intimately associates his own passage beyond earthy life towards resurrection with that of Christ, which was about to be liturgically enacted in the Easter Eucharist.

5.2. Eucharistic Burial

In many religions and cultures, the passage from the present world into the next is portrayed as a journey from one place to another. In classical mythology, the boundary between these two worlds was represented by rivers. The most infamous of these was the dark, filthy, and sinuous Styx. On departing its fleshly body, the soul was required to traverse this river in order to attain the afterlife. The means of passage was a ferry piloted by Charon, a deity of the underworld. Virgil, the Roman poet who died just fifteen years before the birth of Christ, memorably has Aeneas carried by this unkempt, impatient old man with wild, staring eyes, across the river in a ferry propelled both by sails and by punting, to gain admittance to the underworld.[28]

In order to be granted passage, the soul was required to make a small monetary payment. The second century satirist Lucian, who was born in Syria but travelled widely, describes the haggling with Charon as souls arrived at the riverbank either without payment, or with payment in an incorrect form.[29] As a result, the practice developed at funerals of placing a small coin, known as an *obolos*, into the mouth of the deceased, which would permit passage. Lucian describes this custom, making clear its wide extent while displaying his usual disdain of religious matters.[30] Without payment, the soul could not expect to receive passage into the next world. The *obolos* was not, however, the only item that a dead person needed for their passage. When Psyche visits the underworld to call on Proserpina, the second century Numidian novelist Apuleius has her bear in her hands two barleycakes soaked in mead, as well as having her hold in her mouth two coins. This dual provision is because

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[28] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.295-416, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough with G.P. Goold, rev. ed., 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999–2000), 1.552–61.

[29] *The Downward Journey* 1-21, trans. A.M. Harmon, in *Lucian*, 8 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913–67), 2.1–43.

[30] *On Funerals* 10, trans. A.M. Harmon, in *Lucian*, 4.112–31. See Gregory Grabka, 'Christian Viaticum: A Study of its Cultural Background', *Traditio* 9 (1953), 1–43 (8–13, 16–21).

Pscyhe's visit is, unusually, temporary. The barleycakes are to feed Cerberus, the triple-headed hound that Pscyhe needs to appease and subdue on both of the occasions she passes.[31] In Virgil's account, the baying beast is also appeased by Aeneas, who flings a similar morsel soaked in honey toward the opening of his cavern.[32]

To provide the dead person with an *obolos* and a barleycake immediately upon their death became an important duty for family members. The *obolos* was placed into the person's mouth, often between their teeth. Such provision was fundamental to what was considered a proper burial. If unprovided for, a loved one would face a difficult, delayed passage: Aeneas regards a seething mass of disparate persons both young and old who are awaiting the ferryman in vain. These, he is informed by the sibyl conducting him, are the souls of those who did not receive correct burial, who are condemned to wander the shore for one hundred years before departing on their journey. Many of them met their death suddenly. Examples include people who drowned after being thrown overboard from a ship in a storm, and someone who was crushed by a collapsed building.[33]

The eucharistic bread may be identified with the *obolos* placed into the mouth of the dead person. This association is encouraged by the much later use of flat, circular wafer breads. The eucharistic bread may also be identified with the barleycake placed into the hand of the dead person. Lucian and Apuleius, both writing during the second century, describe a period when Christian burial and eucharistic practices were developing, so these identifications are more than merely literary. Indeed, it is possible that the reference to the barleycakes by Apuleius is to early Christian practice, as eucharistic burial practices were to become a controversial topic in northern Africa, where he lived. They were often frowned upon by bishops, as we learn from Augustine in his description of his mother Monica, who had pursued her son by sea from Carthage to Milan, taking bread, along with cakes and wine, to the *martyria* there. This was in accordance, Augustine reports, with the custom in Africa.[34] She thereby followed the example of Tobias, who was commanded by his aged father to

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[31] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 6.17-20, trans. J. Arthur Hanson, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1.340–9. This text is otherwise known as *The Golden Ass*.

[32] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.417-23, 1.552–61. Curiously, in his mostly excellent discussion Grabka does not give any extended attention to the offering of barleycakes to Cerberus, even though this would strengthen his case for the continuity of classical and Christian eucharistic burial practices.

[33] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.295-416, 1.560–3.

[34] Augustine, *Confessions* 6.2 (2), trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 91.

place bread on the grave of the righteous.[35] *Martyria* were memorial shrines, and archaeological evidence suggests that their typical features included a roof and stone benches surrounding the tomb, which could serve as a table. But Ambrose, who was bishop of Milan, had prohibited such offerings in the city. Augustine would surely have liked to have done the same when bishop of Hippo, had a ban been enforceable in his rural location.

In Syria, in contrast, graveside observances appear to have gained some official recognition. The compiler of the *Didascalia*, which is a church order of the early third century, refers approvingly to those who 'in accordance with the Gospel and in accordance with the power of the Holy Spirit, gather in the cemeteries to read the Holy Scriptures and to offer your prayers and your rites to God without observance and offer an acceptable eucharist, the likeness of the royal body of Christ, both in your congregations and in your cemeteries and on the departure of those who sleep'.[36] The meaning of the compiler's reference to the offering of rites 'without observance' is clarified by his following emphatic injunction that 'you are to have contact with those who rest, without regard for observances, and not to consider them unclean'. This is preceded by the mention of an altercation between Jesus and a group of Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection.[37] Eucharistic worship at gravesides may therefore be seen as a distinctive marker of Christian belief and practice against those who held that such worship was either superfluous, because the dead were not raised, or prohibited, on the grounds that it would violate codes of ritual cleanliness.

Nevertheless, when Augustine became bishop of Hippo, another controversy about eucharistic burial practices was brewing. The practice in question was the placing of the eucharistic bread into the bodies of people who had died. The prohibition issued in response suggests not simply a bread offering at the shrines of martyrs, but the placing of the eucharistic bread into the mouth of the recently deceased before their burial. This act imitated the placing of the *obolos* into the mouth. In 393, just two years before Augustine's episcopal consecration and while he was still a priest in Hippo, a synod held there decreed that the host not be given to dead bodies. This prohibition was restated by councils held at Carthage in 419

[35] Tob. 4.17.

[36] *The Didascalia Apostolorum* 6.22, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 255–6. For twentieth century cemetery gatherings, E.S. Drower, *Water into Wine: A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East* (London: Murray, 1956), 25–7.

[37] Mt. 22.31-3.

and 525.[38] Similar bans, issued in other Christian centres during the next three centuries, indicate that this practice was widespread and difficult to eliminate. A synod at Auxerre (*c.* 578) ordered that the dead not be fed the eucharistic bread.[39] At Constantinople, the Council in Trullo (692) issued a similar prohibition. Like the 419 council in Carthage, it appended scriptural endorsement: 'For it is written: "Take, eat", but the bodies of the dead cannot take or eat.'[40]

Several connected theological issues were at stake here. Augustine's stated reason for objecting to offerings at martyrs' shrines was that they were viewed, by the Christians who offered them, as a sacrifice made to the martyrs as if they were gods, rather than as a sacrifice to Christ as Lord of the martyrs.[41] In Africa, a high degree of respect was certainly paid to martyrs. This was well-justified on the ecclesiological grounds that the Eucharist was a celebration of the heavenly Church, in which the martyrs had a special place, as well as of the earthly Church. However, ordinary Christians did not always understand the difference between fitting respect for the dead and theologically unsound glorification. In the year in which he became bishop of Hippo, Augustine attempted, in his sermon on the festival of Leontius, who was a former bishop of Hippo and martyr, to curtail the customary celebrations. In so doing, he placed himself in danger of attack from the furious crowd.[42] In his earlier response to Faustus, Augustine suggests his willingness to acquiescence in offerings at the shrines, if these were officially sanctioned. He states: 'We erect altars to none of the martyrs but to the God of the martyrs, although at the memorials of the martyrs',

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[38] *Concilia Africae, a. 345–a. 525*, ed. C. Munier (Turnholt: Brepols, 1974), 106, 123, 139, 264 (canon 18 / canon 22 in a minority recension).

[39] *HCC* 2.397 (canon 4, 2nd series), 4.413 (canon 12).

[40] *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, eds George Nedungatt and Michael Featherstone (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 164 (canon 83). See Mt. 26.26.

[41] Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans* 8.27, trans. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 357. For exposition of his attitudes on the matter, Volp, *Tod*, 234–9; Victor Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques : en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 125–69; Frederik van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*, trans. Brian Battershaw and George Robert Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 471–526.

[42] Augustine, Letter 29 to Alypius, in *Letters*, trans. Roland Teske, 4 vols (New York: New City, 2001–5), 1.95–100.

celebrating the Eucharist 'at the altar in the places where the holy bodies are buried.'[43] In his annual sermon on the festival of Cyprian of Carthage, Augustine consistently took the opportunity to draw the attention of his people to the theological and spiritual significance of martyrdom and thereby divert them from raucous carousing. His efforts in 405 are particularly stark: the correct way to celebrate a martyr's festival is to imitate their virtues, to despise the world and earthly things, to sing out of charity rather than cupidity, and to avoid dancing.[44]

Graveside Eucharists were equally problematic in the East. With these in mind, John Chrysostom (347–407) asks his congregation, in a Good Friday sermon that was probably preached in a cemetery, why the Fathers used to go out of the city in order to convene their assemblies and bury their dead. The reason they did so was, he continues, to remember the cross. Chrysostom questions that idea that the body, or other relics of the martyr who lies in the grave, possess their own spiritual power. Rather, the martyr is raised to new life by virtue of Christ's conquest of death on the cross. The grave is no longer victorious: Christ has broken it open, raising Adam and Lazarus. Suggesting that Christ's suffering on the cross directly effects the resurrection, the archbishop of Constantinople evokes the striking image of the dead, loosed from the chains of the grave, standing and regarding Christ in his suffering. He urges his congregation 'contemplating this sad and tragic scene' to magnify Christ with 'sacred and solemn joy' and 'devout and heavenly meditations', and to 'celebrate this sacred day with a solemnity that becomes the true servants of our blessed Master'.[45]

It is frequently suggested that eucharistic offerings at *martyria* were occasional and incidental popular practices that remained marginal to the formal Eucharists that took place in churches. However, this is seriously to underestimate their extent and importance. Eusebius describes how, during the earlier third century, Christians were banned from the cemeteries by the emperor Valerian the Elder, then given back control of them by his successor Publius,

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[43] Augustine, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean* 20.21, trans. Roland Teske (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2007), 279. This text was composed in 408–10.

[44] Augustine, Sermon 111, in *Sermons*, trans. Edmund Hill, 11 vols (Brooklyn, NY: New City, 1990–7), 9.71–80.

[45] John Chrysostom, *The Second Panegyric, or Sermon in Honour of Good Friday*, trans. William Scott (London: Crowder, Robinson, Bew and Nicoll, 1775), 18–19, 21. See 1 Cor. 15.55, Jn 11.38-44, and Mt. 26.52-3; and 'Christ's descent into hell', in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, ed. J.K. Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 185–204.

then ejected from them again under a renewed persecution by Maximim.[46] This indicates that the right of assembly in the cemeteries was fundamental to Christian life. Following detailed examination of archaeological and textual evidence for the growth of Christianity and the number and size of church buildings, Ramsay MacMullen has made a strong case that, in the third and fourth centuries, only a tiny elite proportion of the Christian population, probably as little as one-twentieth, regularly worshipped in church buildings.[47] This, he convincingly argues, was particularly true as the number of Christians rapidly expanded following the Constantinian settlement. For the vast majority, the normal place of worship was the cemetery, which was literally the sleeping place or dormitory where the bodies of the faithful dead awaited their resurrection in Christ.[48]

Augustine does not refer to the custom of placing the eucharistic bread, like an *obolos*, in the mouths of dead bodies, but as has been seen, the canons of the Synod of Hippo show this to have been a contentious practice in cemeteries. By feeding their unmartyred dead in this way, family members were not assuming their deification, as if they were martyrs, but rather the opposite: that their loved ones required the bread's sacramental power in order that their dead bodies might become assimilated into Christ's living, resurrected body. Indeed, the beliefs underlying this practice, and thereby the practice itself, were in many respects more theologically defensible than the observances at martyr shrines, especially as objections were also raised against the latter on the moral grounds that they tended to descend into drunken revelry.[49] An ecclesiological motive for ending the feeding of dead bodies would have been the increasing desire of Christian leaders to eradicate syncretistic practice by establishing clear boundaries between orthodox Christian observance and pagan heterodoxy. From a theological perspective, however, the principal issue at stake was that the reception of the Eucharist requires personal agency by the recipient. As Matthew

[46] Eusebius, *History* 7.11, 7.13, 9.2, 228, 231, 284.

[47] Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity, A.D. 200–400* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2006), 22–32, 104–14; also Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 192–6.

[48] For cemetery offerings in twentieth century Egypt, Wissa-Wassef, *Pratiques*, 185–6.

[49] Ambrose, *De Helia et ieiunio* 17 (62-5), trans. Mary Joseph Aloysius Buck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1929), 89–93. At the culmination of the passage the revellers are compared unfavourably with elephants, on the grounds that elephants, despite their tremendous capacity, usually exercise restraint.

and Mark both clearly state, the communicant makes an outward response by taking (*lambano*) the host into their hands.[50] A dead body does not possess this capacity.

How might the Eucharist continue to be used in burial in ways that avoid the difficulties described? In his *Dialogues*, Pope Gregory the Great (540–590–604), whose liturgical interests were extensive, tells the story of a young monk who had left the monastery to return home but who died immediately upon arrival there. The young man's parents buried his body, but on returning the next day discovered it lying upon the ground outside the grave. They reburied their son's body, but the same thing happened again. The distraught parents then went to Benedict to plead with him to give them the host to place on their son's breast when reburying him.[51] Benedict did so, and the body remained soundly at rest in the earth. This is presented as a reconciling act between Benedict and his former disciple, whose refusal of stability during his life issued in an unquiet grave at his death. More striking, however, is the placing of the eucharistic bread in close physical proximity to a dead body, rather than its feeding to the body immediately after death. In Celtic Ireland, a consecrated host was frequently placed upon a person's breast at burial.[52] Moreover, unbaptized children were sometimes buried with a host in one hand and even a chalice in the other.[53] Gregory's story, however, suggests that a dying adult should have received the host earlier. Had he died at the monastery, the young monk would have been able to do so, and be reconciled with Benedict and the community before his death. His flight from the monastery, however, meant that neither reception nor reconciliation could take place.

5.3. The Dead at the Altar

In two of the most important accounts of saintly death narrated in the previous section, the saint moves to a chapel as the time of their death draws near. Benedict is carried to the chapel by his disciples, and Cuthbert walks there unaided. Why did they wish this? It was unnecessary to be in the chapel in order to receive the viaticum, as has been seen in the many other instances related, in which the host is brought to the recipient. The chapel would have

[50] Mt. 26.26, Mk 14.22.

[51] *DSGG* 2 (24), 94.

[52] F.E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1881), 138–9.

[53] Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 335.

provided space and quiet, but this does not seem, in itself, to be a sufficient explanation. Rather, by entering into the chapel, Benedict and Cuthbert were entering into the place where the Eucharist was celebrated and into a place that was therefore intimately associated with Christ's resurrection. In the case of Cuthbert, this juxtaposition is emphasized, by the reader being told that he went to lie opposite the altar.

On other occasions, the body of a recently dead person was associated with the Eucharist by the placing onto it of the linen cloths that were used for the Eucharist. However, during the sixth century, two synods forbade this practice. A synod at Clermont (535) decreed that corpses should not be covered with palls, and that the body of a bishop should not be covered with the veil that was placed over the vessels. Furthermore, the synod at Auxerre (*c.* 578) that had prohibited the feeding of the eucharistic bread to dead bodies, also ruled that bodies were not to be covered with either a veil or a pall.[54] The use of eucharistic linens as burial shrouds could be interpreted as an attempt to sanctify or even resurrect the body that they covered by means of some kind of spiritual power gained by their previous physical contact with the consecrated eucharistic elements. Alternatively, the practice could be viewed as associating the dead body with the resurrection of Christ that the transformed eucharistic elements embodied. It might be hoped that, if substituted for Christ's resurrected body, the dead human body would become like that body.

The association of the altar with death is ancient. In the Jerusalem Temple, the altar was situated close inside the entrance to the inner court, outside the holy place, and was the place where animals and birds were sacrificed to Yahweh. The Eucharist, also offered at an altar, has frequently been associated with this sacrifice, in ways that will become clearer. In particular, the blood that poured from the sacrifices into channels around the foot of the altar has been related to the blood of Christ, which, in John's account, is shed on the cross when the soldier Longinus pierces Christ's side with a lance,[55] even if the Eucharist itself is a bloodless sacrifice. However, it is by no means the case that Christians have never offered animals for sacrifice. On Good Friday in Merovingian France, Christians sometimes observed the Temple practice of offering an animal at the altar by sacrificing a lamb. Walafrid Strabo, the ninth century Frankish monk, reports that 'some people used to consecrate the flesh of a lamb with a special blessing at Easter, placing it near or under the altar, and on the Day of

[54] *HCC* 4.191 (canons 3, 6), 4.413 (canon 12).

[55] Jn 19.34.

Resurrection received some of that flesh before other bodily foods. An offshoot of this blessing is still practiced by many people.'[56] In regions of Spain and France, a lamb was cooked and distributed among the community, even though lamb was part of the Jewish Passover meal and Christians in the Middle Ages frequently eschewed customs that could be regarded as Jewish.[57] The use of lamb evokes the Johannine imagery of Christ who, in the words of John the Baptist, is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.[58] Nevertheless, the offering of an actually dead creature suggests a deeper motivation than the merely symbolic. Although Christ's dead historical body, because it had been resurrected, could not be offered at the altar, what could be offered there was, according to the imagery from the gospel of John, its closest possible representation. The bringing of an actual body to the altar strikingly demonstrates the powerful association between real, physical death and the hoped-for resurrection as a spiritual body in Christ. Indeed, in the Christian context the bringing of an animal suggests that what is hoped for is precisely bodily renewal, not, as might wrongly be supposed in the human case, the continuation or refashioning of a mind or a soul.

The theological and scriptural nexus of altar, death, and resurrection suggests that the altar, rather than the graveside, is the most fitting place for post-mortem observances. Even if a person's physical body rests in the ground, their soul waits at the altar. Such an association is made in the book of Revelation when, on the opening of the fifth seal of the scroll, John sees 'under the altar (*thusiasterion*) the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given'.[59] This imagery is taken up by some patristic writers, who stress the importance of praying for the dead during the part of the eucharistic liturgy when Christ's body and blood lie upon the altar. Cyril of Jerusalem writes that his worshipping community prays for 'all who have gone before us, believing that this will be of the greatest benefit to the souls of those on whose behalf our supplication is offered in the presence of the holy, the most dread Sacrifice'.[60] Expressing similar sentiments, John

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[56] Walafrid Strabo, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, trans, Alice L. Harting-Correa (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 108–9.

[57] Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians, & the Pig*, trans. Carol Volk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 249–52.

[58] Jn 1.29.

[59] Rev. 6.9.

[60] *ML* 5 (9), 197.

Chrysostom commends daily prayer and giving for the dead, but then boldly asks: 'If the mere memory of a just person can achieve so much, how much will it not achieve when deeds are performed on their behalf as well? . . . I mean, when the entire people is present, holding up their hands, the full complement of priests [is present], and the terrible sacrifice is set up in front, how shall we not importune God when we intercede on their behalf?'[61] By means of prayer in the specific context of the Eucharist, John suggests, the souls of the dead are brought into close juxtaposition with Christ's resurrection life.

In an unusual and significant homily, the Syriac bishop and poet-theologian Jacob of Serugh (*c.* 451–521) laments the decline in formal eucharistic offerings and prayers on behalf of the dead. The men of the community, he complains, no longer bring the bread to the priest to be offered, which by custom was marked with letters or signs representing the dead person or persons. Rather, like the soldiers standing around the cross of the dying Christ, they seek to divine the inheritance of the dead and casts lots for their effects. The women, in contrast, frequent the tombs lamenting. Evoking the fruitless search of Mary Magdalen for Christ in his own tomb, Jacob suggests to the women that the dead receive no benefit from graveside weeping. Rather, he instructs:

> Seek your beloved in the holy temple with God, in whose hands lie all the spirits. Call not to the dead in the grave, for he does not hear you. He is not there: seek for him here in the house of atonement. There all the souls of all the departed assemble; for this place is a harbour of life to them that recline therein. . . . The blood of the cross has sprinkled a quickening upon the souls; and its mighty power has drawn them to come unto it.[62]

A key element of this quickening is reconciliation and the remission of sins. Alluding to incense, Jacob writes: 'To the odour of life which comes forth from the great sacrifice all the souls assemble and come to be pardoned; and through the quickening which the Body of the Son of God imparts, daily the dead scent the odour of life, and by it [the body] they are

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[61] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians* 4 (37), trans. Pauline Allen (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 72–5.

[62] 'A Homily of Mâr Jacob of Sérûgh on the Memorial of the Departed and on the Eucharistic Loaf', trans. Hugh Connolly, *The Downside Review* 29 (1910), 260–70 (265), amended trans.; see Jn 20.1-2.

pardoned.' For the soul on the way to resurrection and to reunification with its body, James is convinced of the efficacious power of the Eucharist.[63]

Nevertheless, despite Jacob's censure the scriptural warrant for bringing items to tombs could be viewed more positively. The tomb of Jesus was visited not only by Mary Magdalen, but by Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, other unnamed women, Peter, and John.[64] In the accounts of Mark and Luke, the stated purpose of the women's visits was to bring spices. These visits account for the episode in the Acts of John of the visit of John and Andronicus to the tomb of the resurrected Drusiana to give thanks, break bread, and share it.[65] Another biblical episode that is frequently cited in support of offerings for the dead is 2 Maccabees 12.39-45. This narrates the collection of two thousand silver drachmas, by the Jewish warrior Judas Maccabeus, for a sin offering on behalf of the enemy soldiers of the Seleucid general Gorgias, whom the Jews had defeated. This is taken on account of the tokens of the idols of Jamina that are found under the tunics of the dead soldiers, to which their defeat is attributed. As with the viaticum, however, the remission of sins is not the only function of eucharistic celebration for the dead. Rather, this reconciliation is part of a larger movement of resurrection into new life. As the writer of 2 Maccabees states, in despatching his collection to Jerusalem, Judas took 'account of the resurrection', without which his action would have been superfluous and foolish. In Christian context, this movement into new life is powerfully presented by Pope Gregory the Great, who describes souls as pleading to have the Eucharist offered for them. Gregory narrates a story told to him by a bishop Felix, who heard it in turn from a priest who ministered in Tauriana, on the southern tip of Italy.[66] For health reasons, the priest sometimes frequented the hot springs. One day a stranger approached him, helping him undress, and afterward bringing him his towels. The same thing happened several times. Wishing to acknowledge his gratitude, the next time he came to bathe the priest brought with him two crown-shaped loaves of bread, which he offered to the man. These were declined, on the grounds that the bread was holy and could not be eaten. The mysterious attendant explained that he had once owned the baths, but because of his sins had been sent back there after death as a servant. He asked the priest to offer the bread to God for him and

[63] Michel D. Guinan, 'Where are the Dead? Purgatory and Immediate Retribution in James of Sarug', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 197, 541–9.

[64] Mt. 28.1, Mk 16.1, Lk. 24.10-12, Jn 20.1-10.

[65] Acts Jn 72, 85-6, in *Apocryphal New Testament*, 331, 335–6.

[66] *DSGG* 4 (57), 266–7.

then disappeared, proving that he was not a man but a spirit. The priest offered the Eucharist for the man each day for a week, and, on returning to the baths, found him no longer there. Gregory concludes: 'The incident points out the great benefits souls derive from the sacred sacrificial offering. Because of these benefits the dead ask it of us, the living, and even show us by signs that it was through this offering that they were pardoned.'[67] In this narrative, the remission of sins is inextricably linked to the benefit of a proper transition into the next life.

The offering of the Eucharist on behalf of the dead is an ancient practice. Polycarp (d. *c.* 155–60) is recorded offering bread with a disciple at the grave of Boukolos, who was the first bishop of Smyrna and therefore his predecessor.[68] In the course of a discussion of the Eucharist, Tertullian (d. *c.* 225) refers to his community making 'offerings for the dead on their anniversary'.[69] No later than the mid-third century, Cyprian states that a priest named Victor should not be so commemorated, on the grounds that he sought to nominate his successor.[70] Nevertheless, the theology underlying eucharistic offerings on behalf of the dead is vulnerable to distortion. For instance, within the setting of a Eucharist the spirits of the dead might be called on, or attempts could be made to justify drunken graveside festivities on the grounds that they are eucharistic liturgy. It is understandable, therefore, that Eucharists for the dead have occasionally been prohibited. For instance, a synod at Toledo excommunicated clergy who held celebrations for the dead 'on behalf of the living, that these may soon die'.[71]

Critics of eucharistic offerings on behalf of the dead have often cited a legalistic attitude to the remission of sins. In the later medieval period, this could become an excuse for ecclesiastical profiteering, with money paid for requiem Masses to be said. Yet it has here been shown that such offerings originate in personal devotion to loved ones who have died, and in the hope that they will share in the resurrection. In the homily quoted earlier in this

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[67] Translation amended with reference to *Dialogues*, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin, 3 vols (Paris: Cerf, 1978–80), 3.184–8.

[68] *The Life of Polycarp* 20, trans. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Strathfield, NSW: St Paul's, 2002), 120–3, and generally 74–84.

[69] Tertullian, 'The Chaplet' 3.3, trans. Edwin A. Quain, in *Disciplinary, Moral, and Ascetical Works* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 223–67 (237).

[70] *Letters of St. Cyprian* 1.2, 1.52.

[71] The 17th synod at Toledo (694), canon 5, in *HCC* 5.247, although it is unclear precisely which observances the canon proscribes.

section, Jacob of Serugh chastises his hearers for failing to bring the eucharistic loaf to be offered, or to allow servants to bring it on their behalf. In contrast with such apathy, Jacob depicts a widow who 'bears the sacrifice in her hands', and a bereaved person who 'carries it and glories in it'. He continues:

> She sends not the loaf to the Lord, like the rich man: she herself offers it, and cries out earnestly that He will accept it of her. She, like the priest, brings in her vow to God, earnestly making mention of her dead over her oblation. Such a one has known how to offer and bring sacrifices to the Lord. . . . Acceptable is the oblation of the bereaved *woman* when it is offered, and with it mingled tears and love and faith: the loaf in her hands, and tears in her eyes, and praise in her mouth.[72]

Jacob's presentation of the widow as a priest, making her offering, crying out that it will be found acceptable, and naming the dead for whom it is offered, is striking. She brings the material product of bread, which she herself has made, as an offering of love for the bodily resurrection of her beloved.

The presence of the dead at the altar is not, however, only spiritual, nor only in the memories of those who grieve. Neither is it a transitory physical presence, such as was manifested to the priest of Tauriana. Rather, the dead are frequently present at the altar, in their full physicality, in the form of relics.[73] By associating the Eucharist with Christian witness even to death in the face of paganism, the *martyrium* altar-grave discussed in chapter 5.2 rooted it in orthodox Christian confession and the resurrection of Christ.[74] This helps to account for the decision of a council at Carthage, in 401, that the Eucharist could only be celebrated on altars with relics, or with close geographical associations with a martyr's life or

[72] 'A Homily of Mâr Jacob', 270.

[73] The inference that the presence of relics within a church implies their proximity to an altar is, however, unsound. On suitable caution, from architectural and textual perspectives respectively, Ann Marie Yasin, 'Reassessing Salonica's Churches: Martyrium Evolution in Question', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012), 59–112; John M. McCulloh, 'The Cult of Relics in the Letters and *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study', *Traditio* 32 (1976), 145–84.

[74] For these conjunctions, Hugo Brandenburg, „Altar und Grab : zu einem Problem des Märtyrerkultes im 4. und 5. Jh", in *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans*, eds M. Lamberigts and P. Van Deun (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 71–98.

death.[75] The tangible connection between the Eucharist and the bodies of the dead, which this proximity established, may be traced back to the events following the martyrdom of Polycarp. The author, who was a member of the church in Smyrna, writes that, following the cremation of Polycarp's body, 'we removed his bones, which were more valuable than expensive gems and more precious than gold, and put them in a suitable place. There, whenever we can gather together in joy and gladness, the Lord will allow us to commemorate the birthday of his martyrdom.'[76] Furthermore, Pope Felix I (269–74) 'decreed that mass [*missa*] be celebrated over the memorials of the martyrs'.[77]

This mandate probably evokes the celebration of the Eucharist upon the cemetery graves of individual martyred Christians on the anniversaries of their martyrdom. During the new era of state toleration of the Christian religion that followed the Edict of Milan, however, it was no longer necessary for Christians to assemble in such furtive fashion. Nevertheless, the theological connection of the Eucharist with the resurrection of the dead, which was reflected by the practice of celebration upon or close to the tombs of martyrs, persisted, and was indeed strengthened. Large church buildings began to be constructed upon the burial sites of important martyrs in place of the open graves or tiny chapels that had previously existed. The altar-grave was thereby translated into the formal public context of a church. In the process, its symbolism acquired an overtly ecclesial dimension, with the altar-grave becoming the architectural focal point of collective church worship.[78] The altar and the

[75] *Concilia Africae* 204–5 (canon 83).

[76] Martyrdom of Polycarp 18.2-3, in *AF* 1.392–3.

[77] *Book of Pontiffs* 27, 11.

[78] Franz Wieland, *Mensa und Confessio. Studien uber den Altar der altchristlichen Liturgie : der Altar der vorkonstantinischen Kirche* (Munich: Lentner, 1906), 142–5; idem, *Altar und Altargrab der christlichen Kirchen im 4. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912), 178–84. For important conceptual distinctions, Richard Krautheimer, 'Mensa–coemeterium–martyrium', in *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (University of London Press, 1971), 35–58. For relics in altars generally, Ann Marie Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 151–7; John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West, c. 300–1200* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 12–14, 65–7. For non-Western examples, Anne Michel, « Le Culte des reliques dans les églises byzantines de Jordanie », *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 5 (1999), 31–40.

remains associated with it were subsumed into a larger eschatological dynamic founded in the common hope of the Christian community for resurrection life beyond earthly death.

As has been seen, both Ambrose and Augustine expressed unease over offerings at martyr shrines. Yet the celebration of the Eucharist upon or above a tomb became the norm in both Milanese and North African liturgy.[79] In Milan, this is perhaps a sign that Ambrose, who was elected the city's bishop while a mere catechumen, remained sympathetic to lay observance. However, not all Christians lived close to the grave of a martyr, especially when, in the Constantinian era, Christianity spread into new regions following the ending of the major persecutions. How were Christians in these places to relate their worship to the potent nexus of death, resurrection, and commemoration? The problem was resolved by moving the bodies or body parts of martyrs from their place of death to altars situated within churches in those other locations. In a striking letter to Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Nola (*c.* 354–431) composes poetry to adorn the basilicas that he is building, which are furnished with translated relics. In commemoration of Clarus, he writes: 'His sacred bones are at rest beneath the eternal altar; and so when that chaste gift of Christ is devoutly offered there, the fragrance of his soul may be joined to the divine sacrifice.' Regarding the church of Sulpicius's Christian community at Primuliacum in Aquitaine, Paulinus recognizes that a martyr's ashes may, alternatively, be installed inside the altar. More precisely, such smaller relics would often have been cemented under the *mensa*, which is the large flat stone slab that forms the top of a stone altar. This appears to have been the case in the basilica at Fundi, which Paulinus was constructing using his considerable wealth. There he envisions the ashes of Andrew, Luke, Nazarius, Protasius, and Gervasius, 'under the lighted altar, a royal slab of purple marble cover[ing] the bones of holy men'.[80]

The supreme promoter of the idea that altars should contain relics, however, was the French bishop Saint Gregory of Tours (*c.* 538–94). The altar of his own private oratory, within his house, contained the relics of Saint Stephen, which he had relocated there after the reliquary in the altar, being relocated during enlargement works, had been found to contain none of the remains that had previously been believed to be there. Gregory also deposited

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[79] Ann Marie Yasin, 'Sight lines of sanctity at late antique martyria', in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, eds Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 248–80 (248–9).

[80] *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola* 32.6-8, 11, 17, trans. P.G. Walsh, 2 vols (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1966–7), 1.134–59 (140, 141–3, 145–6, 150–1).

there relics of Saint Illidus, Saint Saturninus, Saint Martin of Tours, and other unnamed saints.[81] Moreover, he reports many other instances of relics being placed in altars, many undoubtedly at his own instigation. Other relics of Saint Stephen were installed in the altar of the church at Bourges. When the cathedral in Bazas was constructed, a silver flask containing the blood of Saint John the Baptist, which a pious woman was believed to have collected at his martyrdom, was deposited in its altar. Relics of Saint Genesius, who was martyred at Arles, were in the altar at Embrun, and relics of Saint Nazarius were in the altar of the church at Saint-Nazaire-sur-Loire. A silver reliquary in the altar of the church at Thiers held relics of Saint Symphorianus.[82] In some accounts, however, the altar preceded the relic. At Newy-le-Roi, the relics of Saints Andrew and Saturninus were rescued from one church during a fire and relocated to another church that had previously been bereft of relics. When the church that had been destroyed was rebuilt, these were replaced with relics of Saint Vincentius. The altar of the church in Pressigny was furnished with relics of Saint Nicetus, also having previously had none.[83]

The altar, rather than the cemetery, thereby became the focal site of death and resurrection for Christians. It is important to understand that the relics were not themselves intended to be objects of worship. Rather, through their juxtaposition with the eucharistic elements they entered into physical solidarity with Christ's resurrection life. In some Oriental Orthodox Churches, including in Armenia, well-founded discomfort with the misdirection of worship away from the Eucharist and onto the relics appears to have motivated the locating of relics away from altars in separate receptacles.[84] In other regions, notably Coptic Egypt, relics were installed in moveable caskets.[85] This enabled them to be stored safely in times of

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[81] Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs* 33, trans. Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool University Press, 1988), 52–3; idem, *Glory of the Confessors* 20, trans. Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool University Press, 1988), 34; idem, Gregory of Tours, *Life of the Fathers* 2.3, trans. Edward James (Liverpool University Press, 1991), 38.

[82] Gregory, *Glory of the Martyrs* 11; 33; 46; 51; 60; 32, 53, 70, 76–7, 84.

[83] Gregory, *Glory of the Martyrs* 30, 50; Gregory, *Life* 8.11, 75.

[84] Lizette Larson-Miller, 'The altar and the martyr: theological comparisons in liturgical texts and contexts', in *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighbouring Christian East*, ed. Roberta R. Irvine (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 237–60 (244–8).

[85] Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Coptic Saints and Pilgrimages* (American University in Cairo Press, 2002), 63–6.

persecution but brought close to the altar for the eucharistic celebration on particular occasions, such as the festival of the appropriate saint.

In some instances, this dependence of relics upon the Eucharist was established at a church's consecration by the deposition within the altar not only of relics but of the consecrated host itself. In the Pontifical (*c.* 1100) attributed to archbishop Egbert of York, after the altar is anointed with the oil of chrism three hosts are placed within it along with three grains of incense, as well as relics.[86] Identical consecration rituals are prescribed in the Sacramentary of Ratoldus and in the Pontifical of Saint Dunstan. That such depositions actually occurred is confirmed by both textual and archaeological evidence.[87] In medieval Europe, perhaps the most famous example was at Wilsnack, where the three bleeding hosts around which the town's major pilgrimage cult developed were retrieved from the altar, where they had been buried, several days after the church's destruction by fire.[88] In Germany, there are many examples of chapels constructed in locations where, according to tradition, a host had been retrieved after being buried or lost, with the host then buried beneath the altar. These traditions are inevitably linked to instances of the host being removed from a church, whether by a communicant or as the result of theft, as described in chapter 3.1.[89] Such events inevitably occur with greatest frequency during Holy Week and Eastertide because, as will be described in chapter 6.3, this is when laypeople were most likely to receive communion and

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[86] *The Pontifical of Egbert* 63v, in *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals*, ed. H.M.J. Banting (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1989), 50.

[87] G.J.C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 321–2; Michel Andrieu, Ordo 42.11, in *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge*, 5 vols (Leuven: Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense, 1961–85), 4.400, also 389–92; W.H. Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved: A Survey of the Practice of Reserving the Eucharist, with Special Reference to the Communion of the Sick, during the First Twelve Centuries* (London: Mowbray, 1917), 89–102; *The Sacramentary of Ratoldus* 80, 13r, ed. Nicholas Orchard (Cranbrook: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2005), 35; Daniel Rock, *The Church of our Fathers as seen in St. Osmund's Rite for the Cathedral of Salisbury: With Dissertations on the Belief and Ritual in England Before and After the Coming of the Normans*, ed. G.W. Hart and W.H Frere, 4 vols (London: Murray, 1905), 1.34–6.

[88] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 25–6.

[89] For numerous examples, Romuald Bauerreiss, *Pie Jesus : das Schmerzensmann-Bild und sein Einfluss auf die Mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit* (Munich: Widmann, 1931), 22–79, 89–91.

therefore the period when the host was most likely to be administered and reserved. Also, Easter occurred close to the start of the crop growing season. These factors lent further emphasis to the association between the Eucharist and resurrection.

In other locations, relics were deposited not within an altar but beneath it. Such an arrangement provided greater space, especially if a whole body was to be buried, and potentially increased its protection from theft. When dedicating what is now the basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence in 393, Ambrose had deposited under the altar the relics of Saints Vitalis and Agricola, which had been exhumed from Bologna. Moreover, he planned his own burial under the altar of his cathedral.[90] The tomb of Saint Peter was located beneath the altar of his basilica in Rome, and is described by Gregory as 'quite inaccessible'. In Lyons, the relics of the 48 martyrs of 177 were retrieved and buried beneath the altar in the Abbey of Saint-Martin d'Ainay.[91] Several popes have been interred beneath altars in the Basilica of Saint Peter, or reburied there following beatification. These include Saint Leo the Great and his three canonized successors of the same name, Saint Leo IX, Saint Pius X (after his 1951 beatification), Blessed Innocent XI (following his 1956 beatification), Saint John XXIII (after his beatification in 2000), and Saint John Paul II (following his 2011 beatification).[92] An alternative configuration consisted of a crypt beneath the church's main altar that was accessible by steps, and which contained another altar directly beneath it. For example, within the church of Saint Peter in Bordeaux was a crypt with its own altar and relics. Within the church of Saint John in Lyons, Saint Irenaeus was buried beneath the crypt altar.[93]

In earlier periods, burial within or beneath an altar was not viewed as appropriate for Christians who were not martyrs. Even the body of the mighty Constantine, which was originally buried at the centre of his cruciform Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, either beneath or beside the altar, was transferred to a mausoleum alongside

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[90] Paulinus, *Life of Ambrose* 29 (50–1); Jean-Michel Spieser, 'Ambrose's foundations at Milan and the question of martyria', trans. J.M. Featherstone, in *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), VII.

[91] Gregory, *Glory of the Martyrs* 27; 48; 45, 73.

[92] Wendy J. Reardon, *The Deaths of the Popes: Comprehensive Accounts, including Funerals, Burial Places, and Epitaphs* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 40-1, 61-4, 84, 215, 236.

[93] Gregory, *Glory of the Martyrs* 33; 49; 54, 73.

the church after the bodies of the apostles were translated there.[94] Confessors have nevertheless been allotted places in close proximity to altars. Gregory records that the body of Saint Quintianus was buried in the basilica of Saint Stephen at Rodez, on the left side of the altar.[95] Such translations were often motivated by an increased reverence for the saint in question after their burial in a less prominent location. The body of Saint Ursinus, who is considered the first bishop of Bourges, was removed from the field in which it had originally been interred and reburied next to the altar in the church of Saint Symphorianus in the city. Saint Gregory of Langres was originally buried in a corner of the basilica there, but the location was narrow and difficult for pilgrims to approach. As a result, his son and successor as bishop, Saint Tetricus, built an apse behind the altar to hold his tomb.[96] Although this is presented as a practical measure, the fact that the body was moved closer to the altar suggests the theological motivation of drawing his body into the resurrection as anticipated in the Eucharist. Indeed, the positioning of the tombs of confessors close to the church's main altar was to become the norm in other countries, such as England.[97]

So far in this chapter, it has been seen that practices surrounding death, including the viaticum, feeding the dead, burial, and commemoration, have exerted tremendous influence upon the development of eucharistic practice. Indeed, the assembled evidence suggests that, during the early Christian centuries, they were its primary drivers. This governing linkage of the Eucharist with death was not, however, due to the belief that the Eucharist was a source of autonomous mystical power. Rather, when the dying and the dead received the Eucharist, they entered into the resurrection life of Jesus Christ, which was itself a raising from the dead. It is to the eucharistic representation of this life that we now turn.

5.4. Raised by the Spirit

In medieval allegorical interpretations of the Eucharist, the liturgy was viewed as recollecting the whole of the life of Christ, including his birth, preaching, passion, death, resurrection, and

[94] Richard Krautheimer, 'On Constantine's Church of the Apostles in Constantinople', trans. Cecil L. Striker, in *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (University of London Press, 1971), 27–34.

[95] Gregory, *Life* 4.5, 47.

[96] Gregory, *Glory of the Confessors* 79 (85); idem, *Life* 7.4, 63.

[97] Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), 63–91.

ascension. This captivating vision was unfolded in chapter 2. The present chapter will focus more closely on the portion of this typology concerned with Christ's death and resurrection, linking these with the death and resurrection of participants in the Eucharist.

In the eucharistic doctrine promulgated at the Council of Trent, the Eucharist was presented as the work of Jesus Christ. Central to this interpretation was the idea of sacrifice. The first chapter of the Council's twenty-second session, which convened in 1562, opens by describing the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood in terms reminiscent of the letter to the Hebrews. It was necessary, the text continues, that another priest should arise in order to consummate the sanctified people of God and lead them to perfection.[98] The Mass was instituted in order to make this sacrifice visible, which human nature requires, through representation, memorialization, and the remission of sins. The theology of Christ's sacrifice of himself upon the cross for the sins of the world is reflected in the canon of the 1570 Roman rite. The priest prays that the holy and unblemished sacrifices presented at the altar may be blessed, following this petition with prayers for the living and the departed. The plea is then made that God approve the offering and find it acceptable. Next comes the consecration of the bread and the wine by means of the priest's repetition of Christ's words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper. The bread and wine are subsequently described as this 'pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation'.[99] There follows the plea that God accept the offerings, and the evocative imagery of them being borne by angelic hands to the heavenly altar in order that all who receive them may be filled with grace and blessing. The prayer concludes with commemorations, a doxology, an elevation, and the people's 'Amen'.

The trope of sacrifice continued to be employed, from 1549 onward, in the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*. In the 1662 edition, the priest addresses God as heavenly Father, who gave his son Jesus Christ to 'suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'.[100] By implication, this wording distinguishes Christ's 'full, perfect, and sufficient', once-for-all sacrifice of himself on the cross from the offering of bread and wine in the Holy Communion, through which

[98] *DEC* 2.732–3; see Heb. 7.

[99] *The Roman Missal*, 3rd ed. (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010), 675. Eucharistic Prayer I approximates to the 1570 canon.

[100] *The Book of Common Prayer* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), 255.

those who receive them will be 'partakers of [Christ's] most blessed Body and Blood'. The Communion is a memorialization of Christ's past sacrifice, with the notion that it is in any way a continuation or completion of that sacrifice explicitly excluded. As a result, even more theological weight is placed upon a christology of sacrifice than in the Roman canon. The work of the Spirit, in contrast, is entirely absent.

In the case of the 1570 Roman rite, some modern presentations have sought to infer two epicleses. This is especially true of teaching aids that set the ordinary four eucharistic prayers in the 1970 and 2002 *Roman Missals* in parallel according to a single structure. It has been argued that the pleas that the petitions that the Eucharist be approved and found acceptable, and that it be to its recipients a source of grace and blessing, are effectively epicleses. Nevertheless, the 1570 prayer of consecration makes no explicit reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. The notion that the prayer contains two epicleses, or even one, cannot be supported by a literal reading.[101]

The later twentieth century discomfort at the lack of any obvious epiclesis, and the consequent attempts to infer epicleses, are each striking. From the perspective of later twentieth century Trinitarian theology, which has been informed by patristic theology, the work of the Spirit is rightly viewed as central both within the Godhead and in the Eucharist. In the Orthodox Churches this has always been accepted, and is reflected in the two major Orthodox liturgies, which have been in continual use since late antiquity. In the anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom, worship is offered to the whole Trinity, including to the Holy Spirit, and the source of salvation is the Trinity collectively. Later in the prayer, the words of Christ at his Last Supper are repeated, to which the people respond, on both occasions, 'Amen'. So far, the structure seems similar to the Western model. However, the text that follows the words of institution suggests that these words cannot be regarded as consecratory. Addressing God, the priest's part of the anaphora continues:

> we ask, pray and implore you: send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts here set forth,
> and make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ,
> and what is in this cup the precious Blood of Your Christ,

[101] Enrico Mazza, *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo, 1986), 68–72.

changing [*metabalon*] them by your Holy Spirit, Amen, Amen, Amen.[102]

This extended petition indicates that the transformation effected in the bread and wine is the work of the Spirit. In the more loquacious liturgy of Basil, this work is amplified, with the prayer that the Spirit may 'come upon us and upon these gifts here set forth, to bless, hallow, and make' the bread to be Christ's body.[103] The structure of the anaphoras of Chrysostom and Basil reflects Orthodox theology, in which it is the epiclesis of the Spirit that resurrects Christ's dead body into his risen body. Indeed, in so far as a specific moment for the change in the bread and wine may be identified, this has been classically identified not with the words of institution but with the epiclesis.[104] In the liturgy, the bread offered at the altar represents Christ's dead body. This is transformed into his risen body and received by believers. In the terms of Paul's letter to the Romans, the Spirit 'raised Jesus from the dead', and if dwelling in believers will also give life to their own mortal bodies.[105]

The eucharistic power of the Spirit is powerfully articulated by the eucharistic prayers of the East Syrian rite, which by tradition entirely omit words of institution.[106] In this respect, the rite follows John's gospel and the Didache.[107] An early instance of this omission is the anaphora of Addai and Mari, which has been used in the Assyrian Church of the East since the seventh century. The absent institutional words are compensated, however, by a strong epiclesis of the Spirit. In the prayer's penultimate stanza, the priest prays:

And let thy Holy Spirit come, O my Lord, and rest upon this offering of thy servants,

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[102] *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 33–4.

[103] *The Orthodox Liturgy* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 128.

[104] Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 121–33.

[105] Rom. 8.11.

[106] For a useful overview, Anthony Gelston, 'The East Syrian eucharistic prayers', in *The Serious Business of Worship: Essays in Honour of Bryan D. Spinks*, eds Melanie C. Ross and Simon Jones (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 55–64.

[107] Carsten Claussen, 'The Eucharist in the Gospel of John and in the Didache', in *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, eds Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett (Oxford University Press, 2007), 135–63.

> and bless it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of sins and for the forgiveness of shortcomings, and for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all who have been pleasing before thee.[108]

The petitions for pardon and forgiveness that, in the 1570 Roman rite, are associated with the idea of Christ's sacrifice, are here aligned with the epiclesis of the Spirit. Importantly, added to them are the hopes for resurrection and new life, which the Spirit brings. By receiving Christ's resurrection body in the power of the Spirit, believers enter into that resurrection themselves. Another East Syrian anaphora, that of Nestorius, includes an epiclesis that is, in many respects, similar to that of Addai and Mari. However, a significant difference is that it is made clear that the Spirit transforms the elements. The priest prays that the Spirit, referred to in the feminine, 'make this bread and this cup the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, changing them and sanctifying for us by the activity of the Holy Spirit'.[109] The epiclesis in the anaphora of Theodore also shares many similar features, while making clear the Trinitarian context of the consecration. The priest asks that the Spirit, again referred to as feminine, 'bless and hallow and seal [the gifts] in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'.[110]

The East Syrian rite is commented upon in rich detail by Theodore of Mopsuestia in his *Catechetical Homilies*. Within the East Syrian Church, a form of Theodore's anaphora is still in use today during Advent and Lent. In his fifteenth homily, Theodore writes that

> when we receive the grace coming from the Holy Spirit, [our Lord] wanted us no longer to regard the nature [of the body and blood] but accept them as the body and blood of our Lord. Also the body of our Lord did not possess immortality and [the power] to give immortality, but this was given him by the Holy Spirit. At his

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[108] *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* 56-9, ed. and trans. Anthony Gelston (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 54–5.

[109] *Mar Nestorius and Mar Theodore the Interpreter: The Forgotten Eucharistic Prayers of East Syria*, ed. Brian D. Spinks (Cambridge: Grove, 1999), 33.

[110] *Mar Nestorius and Mar Theodore*, 37.

> resurrection from the dead, he attained to his [full] union with the divine nature, and then became immortal and the cause of others' becoming immortal.[111]

Two distinct claims are here being made. First, it is through the work of the Spirit that believers regard the bread and wine as Christ's body and blood. Second, the body of Christ received immortality from the Spirit only at the resurrection, rather than possessing this as of right for all time. Theodore here evokes Johannine imagery: it is the Spirit, not the flesh, which gives life.[112] Through the Spirit, immortality comes not only to Christ, but also to other humans. Christ is the 'first to receive this transformation from the divine nature', leading believers themselves to share in the heavenly life.[113] With humans, this sharing is the result of the transformation of the elements, which is due to the Spirit's descent. In his next homily, Theodore draws upon Pauline pneumatology: Christ was declared to be God's son 'with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead'.[114] In this fact is grounded the eucharistic association with human resurrection: if, as a result of the believer receiving the Eucharist, the Spirit dwells in him or her, God will give life to their mortal body through the Spirit, in a way similar to that in which he resurrected Christ's body from the dead.[115] Theodore continues:

> When the pontiff affirms that [this bread and wine] are the body and blood of Christ, he reveals clearly that they have become the body and blood of Christ by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and become immortal. . . . But [the priest] also asks that the grace of the Holy Spirit might come upon all those assembled, who have been similarly born again, in order to perfect them as a single, corporate kind of body that is in

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[111] *Catechetical Homilies* 15.10, in Frederick G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia* (London: Routledge, 1999), 168–9. For Theodore's liturgical and theological contexts, Bryan D. Spinks, 'Eucharistic Offering in the East Syrian Anaphoras', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 50 (1984), 347–71.

[112] Jn 6.63, in *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, trans. Alphonse Mingana (Cambridge: Heffer, 1933), 75–6 (also 104). This is a more complete text of the homily excerpted in McLeod, *Theodore*.

[113] *Catechetical Homilies* 16.30, 170.

[114] Rom. 1.4.

[115] Rom. 8.11.

> communion with the body of our Lord, and to bind them in harmonious peace and concern about what is right.[116]

Notwithstanding Theodore's commentary, there has been some uncertainty among liturgists about whether the prayer that he describes might, in fact, have included words of institution that have since been lost. However, there is no evidence of any such lost words. It therefore seems entirely justified to take Theodore's description of the liturgy at face value, and as reflecting an ancient—and, as will be seen, biblically grounded—theology of the Eucharist.[117] His anaphora, like those of Addai and Mari, and of Nestorius, reflects a eucharistic theology in which the action of the Spirit is sufficiently powerful and present to render words of institution unnecessary.

To take seriously the pneumatology that Theodore unfolds in the context of the Eucharist might require a reappraisal of his alleged Nestorianism.[118] Theodore believes that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. This resurrection could only be possible and needful if Christ had truly died in both his natures. Moreover, at the resurrection, Christ's human and divine natures are reunified by the power of the Spirit. The Eucharist, in which communicants really feed on his body, supremely manifests this unification in the Spirit.[119] Trinitarian considerations such as these might lead, in turn, to a reappraisal of the meaning of adoptive sonship: not a sonship that contrasts with true sonship, but a sonship that points to the Spirit as the source of the eternal sharing by the human Jesus in the sonship of the divine Word.[120] In contrast with the christology of Cyril of Alexandria—

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[116] *Catechetical Homilies* 16.12-13, 169.

[117] Enrico Mazza, 'The structure of the anaphora in the Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia', in *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, trans. Ronald E. Lane (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995), 287–331.

[118] Bryan D. Spinks, 'The East Syrian Anaphora of Theodore: Reflections upon its Sources and Theology', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 103 (1989), 441–55. 'Nestorianism' is here used to refer to the school of theology as typically understood. The relation of this to the doctrine of Nestorius himself is obscure.

[119] Peter Bruns, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel Verbinden : eine Studie zu den Katechetischen Homilien des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (Louvain: Peeters, 1995), 346–59.

[120] Richard A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 214–15.

which was prominent in the presentation in chapter 4.2 of the Eucharist as Christ's flesh assimilated by believers—Theodore's christology does not depend upon the notion that the union of Christ's natures is hypostatic. Rather, Theodore seeks to comprehend how the two contrary sets of divine and human attributes may be held together in the power of the Spirit.[121] This suggests that Christ's natures subsist in a unity-in-tension.

In Western theology, the Spirit has at times been presented as a messenger subordinated to the Father and the Son, who shuttles between each of them, and between the Godhead and believers. In the pneumatology of Theodore, in contrast, and in the East Syrian tradition of which he is part, the Spirit is a powerful, overshadowing, and passionate being. The dominant elemental symbol through which the Eucharist is here understood is fire. This imagery is developed with especial power by Ephrem, who draws upon a host of biblical imagery of the descent of fire upon sacrifices that God deems acceptable after prayer has been offered.[122] From a Christian perspective, the most graphic of these images is Isaiah 6.6-7. This passage describes an ordination into to a spiritual ministry that is grounded in mystical liturgical celebration. The burning coal, suggestive of the eucharistic bread consecrated by the Spirit, is borne from the altar with tongs because not even the seraph could bear to hold it. Yet Isaiah, the one chosen by God, is able to receive the coal and is thereby freed from guilt and sin.

In Syrian anaphoras, the presence of the Spirit is evoked by several biblical terms and episodes. One is the baptism of Christ. Just as the Spirit descended upon Christ in the River Jordan, so she descends upon the elements of bread and wine. This associates the elements with Christ, as well as connecting the Eucharist with believers' own baptism, in which they die to sin and are raised to new life. By means of the same term, the Syriac verb *nḥet*, the descent motif also locates the Eucharist in the upper room of Pentecost, in which the believers were gathered to celebrate the Eucharist.[123] A good example is the Syrian version of the Liturgy of Saint James, in which God is addressed as him 'who descended in the likeness of a dove upon our Lord Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, who descended upon Your holy

[121] Bruns, *Den Menschen*, 379.

[122] Sidney H. Griffith, '"Spirit in the Bread; Fire in the Wine": The Eucharist as "Living Medicine" in the Thought of Ephraem the Syrian', *Modern Theology* 15 (1999), 225–46; Sebastian P. Brock, 'Fire from Heaven: from Abel's Sacrifice to the Eucharist. A Theme in Syriac Christianity', *Studia Patristica* 25 (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 229–43; Bruns, *Den Menschen*, 355–6.

[123] For the baptism, Mt. 3.16, Mk 1.10, Lk. 3.22, Jn 1.32. For Pentecost, Acts 2.1-4.

Apostles in the likeness of fiery tongues'.[124] Similar imagery is contained in the Greek version of the Liturgy of Saint James, which is sometimes used in Eastern Orthodox Churches on the feast of Saint James (23 October). Two other Syrian anaphoras that refer both to Christ's baptism and to Pentecost are those of Saint Mark and Saint Philoxenus of Mabbug.[125] Moreover, in each of these, the Spirit descending onto Christ in the River Jordan is likened to a dove.

A second biblical association is with the work of the Spirit at the annunciation. This is suggested by the Syriac *shra*, meaning 'reside', which is regularly used by early Syrian biblical exegetes.[126] Just as the Spirit came to reside with Mary, causing her to conceive Jesus Christ within her womb, so the Spirit comes upon the bread and wine, making Christ present within them. Furthermore, in John's prologue the Word took flesh and resided with humankind, in a similar way to that in which the Word becomes present in fleshly form by the power of the Spirit in the Eucharist.[127] A more directly liturgical association is with the sanctuary that the Lord instructed Moses to construct for him out of the offerings given by the people, for his divine presence to reside in.[128] This association of the Eucharist with the incarnation is notable in the West Syrian tradition. The ninth-century bishop Moses Bār Kēphā writes:

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[124] Baby Varghese, 'The theological significance of the *epiklesis* in the Liturgy of Saint James', in *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy: Issues of Doctrinal History in East and West from the Patristic Age to the Reformation*, eds István Perczel, Réka Forrai, and György Geréby (Leuven University Press, 2005), 363–80 (365–6).

[125] *Anaphoras: The Book of the Divine Liturgies according to the Rite of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch*, trans. Murad Saliba Barsom (Lod, NJ: Samuel, 1991), 167–70, 391–2.

[126] See Sebastian P. Brock, 'Invocations to/for the Holy Spirit in Syriac Liturgical Texts: Some Comparative Approaches', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 265 (2001), 377–406 (388–90); idem, 'Towards a Typology of the Epicleses in the West Syrian Anaphoras', *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 260 (2000), 173–92.

[127] Lk. 1.35, Jn 1.14. Another useful compilation is *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, eds and trans. R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, 3rd rev. ed. (London: Collins, 1987).

[128] Sebastian P. Brock, 'The Background to some Terms in the Syriac Eucharistic Epicleses', *The Harp* 13 (2000), 1–12 (2–3).

> Just as in the case of the holy Virgin Mary the Father willed that the Son should become incarnate, but the Son came down into the womb of the Virgin and became incarnate, and the Spirit also came down to the Virgin and caused the Son to be incarnate of her: so here also in the case of the altar: the Father wills that the Son be united hypostatically to the bread and wine, and that they become His body and His blood; but the Son comes down that He may be hypostatically united to them; and the Spirit also comes down that He may unite them to Him, even as He caused them to be incarnate of the Virgin.[129]

This comparison of the Eucharist with the incarnation has a Western feel to it, especially in view of the language of the hypostatic union. This is applied directly to the union of the Son to the bread and wine, although thereby also implicitly to the incarnation, which is presented as its model. As has already been explained, the notion of a close union of Christ's two natures was not accepted in the East Syrian tradition, which instead emphasized the unity in distinction between Christ's two natures. However, the clear difference with the Western tradition is the careful presentation of the Spirit as completing the will of the Father in effecting both the life-bringing incarnation and eucharistic conversion.

A third biblical grounding for eucharistic pneumatology is the Passover, implied by *aggen*, which appears in the East Syrian anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia.[130] Just as, in Egypt, the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, who had marked their lintel and doorposts with the blood of a lamb, so the Spirit is powerfully present over the Eucharist, bringing life and hope in the face of death. This pneumatological typology from the Passover narrative offers a striking new perspective on the normal eucharistic associations of the Exodus, which are either with the manna coming down from heaven or with liberation. In particular, it brings into prominence the blood and thus the chalice. The Lord does not pass

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[129] George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes and Moses Bār Kēphā, *Two Commentaries on the Jacobite Liturgy*, eds and trans. R.H. Connolly and H.W. Codrington (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), 60.

[130] Ex. 12.13, 23, 27. See Brock, 'Invocations', 391–5. For further discussion of the term, idem, 'What's in a word? An intriguing choice in the Syriac *Diatesseron*', in *Understanding, Studying and Reading: New Testament Essays in Honour of John Ashton*, eds Christopher Rowland and Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 180–7.

over the manna in the wilderness. Rather, he passes over those houses marked by the blood of the Lamb, thereby sparing them from death.

Going back yet earlier, a fourth biblical association is with the Spirit hovering, or brooding, over the waters on the first day of creation, when the earth was still a dark, formless void. The verb suggestive of this, *nraḥḥep*, appears in many West Syrian epicleses, the role of the Spirit at creation having been more contentious among East Syrian theologians.[131] The tremendous power that such a role invests in the Spirit is communicated by the fifth century poet and theologian Narsai. In a homily on the Eucharist, he writes of the priest:

> The Spirit he asks to come and brood over the oblation and bestow upon it power and divine operation. The Spirit comes down at the request of the priest . . . whom He has consecrated. It is not the priest's virtue that celebrates the adorable Mysteries; but the Holy Spirit celebrates by His brooding. The Spirit broods, not because of the worthiness of the priest, but because of the Mysteries which are set upon the altar. As soon as the bread and wine are set upon the altar they shew forth a symbol of the death of the Son, also of His resurrection; wherefore that Spirit which raised Him from the dead comes down now and celebrates the Mysteries of the resurrection of His body.[132]

In this description, the role of the priest appears to be almost incidental. Agency rests with the Spirit, and any exercised by the priest is due to the prior work of the Spirit at his ordination. Another sacramental allusion is identifiable, with the use of *nraḥḥep* relating the bread and wine of the Eucharist to the water of baptism. This is because, when the baptismal water is blessed, it is frequently compared with the waters of creation. This imagery finds a further analogue in Genesis, when Noah sends a dove out of the ark to search for dry land. The dove returns from its second journey clutching an olive leaf in its beak, proving that the floodwaters are subsiding to expose solid land, upon which Noah, his offspring, and the

[131] Gen. 1.2. See Brock, 'Invocations', 395–7; idem, 'Towards', 181–2.

[132] *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* 7, trans. R.H. Connolly (Cambridge University Press, 1909), 21.

animals will be able to live. Similarly, the dove of the Spirit, who is sent by the Father onto the bread and the wine, announces their new spiritual solidity in Christ.[133]

5.5. The Spirit in Recent Eucharistic Prayers

The prayers discussed in the previous section, including an epiclesis but no words of institution, represent instructive extremes. In the course of the twentieth century, however, it came to be accepted within many denominations that the dichotomy between a eucharistic theology that attributed everything to the work of Christ and one that depended solely on the work of the Spirit was false. Within the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, new eucharistic prayers were developed that referred to the work of both Christ and the Spirit. Furthermore, ecumenical openness to contrasting traditions is growing. Notably, the Roman Catholic Church has endorsed the anaphora of Addai and Mari, accepting it to be a valid eucharistic prayer.[134] Nevertheless, the common pattern in the present day is for the epiclesis and words of institution to be present together in order to represent, in different ways, the co-operation of the trinitarian persons.

The co-presence of Christ as Word, and of the Spirit, draws the communicant into the life of both. Saint Symeon the New Theologian describes this dual partaking in Christ of believers in the Eucharist. By participating in Christ's flesh they enter into union with Christ's human nature, gaining their true corporeality. By participating in Christ's spiritual nature, they become one with the invisible God. Believers are thereby 'united, according to both perceptions, to both the twin natures of Christ, becoming one body with Him and fellow communicants of his glory and divinity'.[135] Equally important is that this is participation in the life of the Trinity. Recognition of the work of the Spirit in the Eucharist should not lead to a separating out of discrete 'moments' of activity that are attributed to the different

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[133] For Noah, Gen. 8.8-12.

[134] 'Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East' 3, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 20 July 2001.

[135] St. Symeon, the New Theologian, *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses* 14, trans. Alexander Golitzin, 3 vols (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 1.180. For discussion, István Perczel, 'The bread, the wine and the immaterial body: Saint Symeon the New Theologian on the eucharistic mysteries', in *Eucharist*, 131–56.

Trinitarian persons. Rather, both Christ and the Spirit draw worshippers into the mystery of Trinitarian relationality in the Father, to whom the whole prayer is addressed.

Examples of epiclectic revival include the new eucharistic prayers of the 1970 Roman Missal and the Church of England's Alternative Service Book of 1980. The Holy Spirit is invoked in most of the eucharistic prayers in these, and in the revisions that have followed—*Common Worship* of 2000, and the 2002 Roman Missal—either once or twice. In this respect, the Church of England, other Anglican Churches, and the Methodist Church in Britain, have followed a broadly similar liturgical trajectory to the Roman Catholic Church.[136] The ways in which epicleses feature in the eucharistic prayers of different Churches in the West may be conveniently presented by means of a schema comprising four categories, according to the number of epicleses and their position relative to the words of institution: elemental, ecclesial, double, and combined. However, the ancient tradition of eucharistic prayers lacking words of institution but possessing an epiclesis also continues, and this forms a fifth category.

The first category, the elemental, entails a single epiclesis over the elements before the words of institution, and nothing afterwards. This is found in Prayer C of the Church of England's *Common Worship*. After the Sanctus, the priest says:

> Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray
> and grant that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
> we receiving these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine,
> according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution,
> in remembrance of his death and passion,
> may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood.[137]

The words of institution then follow. Following these, no further mention is made of the Spirit until the closing doxology. Here the Spirit is therefore presented as acting wholly

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[136] Paul F. Bradshaw, 'The rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in modern eucharistic theology and practice', in *The Spirit in Worship, Worship in the Spirit*, eds Teresa Berger and Bryan D. Spinks (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2009), 79–96. For antecedents, John H. McKenna, *Eucharist and Holy Spirit: The Eucharistic Epiclesis in Twentieth Century Theology (1900–1966)* (Great Wakering: Alcuin, 1975).

[137] *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House, 2000), 192.

through the gifts and the words of institution. This prayer is popular with Anglo-Catholics because it can be taken as implying that the words of institution are sufficient by themselves to consecrate the gifts. *Common Worship* Prayer E similarly petitions the Father to 'send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son', likewise omitting any subsequent substantive reference to the Spirit.[138] Eucharistic Prayer 4 of the Church in Wales' *Order for the Holy Eucharist*, which is similarly structured, employs the more direct petition: 'Sanctify with your Spirit this bread and wine, your gifts to us, that they may be for us the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.'[139]

The second category of epiclesis is ecclesial. This is a single epiclesis, upon the people and following the words of institution, made with no reference to the elements. An example from *Common Worship* is Prayer D. The implied reason for the absence of an epiclesis prior to the words of institution is that those words are not seen as consecratory. Following abbreviated words of institution, the priest prays to the Father:

> Send your Spirit on us now
> that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
> with opened eyes and hearts on fire.[140]

This epiclesis presents Christ's presence in the elements ambiguously, leaving it unclear whether they are of purely instrumental value, creating conditions under which Christ may become present, or whether they themselves mediate that presence. Furthermore, the epiclesis presents the Spirit's action in primarily instrumental terms, as being for the purpose of 'feeding on Christ'. A similar arrangement may be found in option b of the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order* First Order for Holy Communion. Here, following a prayer of thanksgiving in which the gifts are referred to only briefly, the minister addresses the Father, saying: 'Moved by your Holy Spirit, we, your congregation, give you all thanks, praise, and glory, for ever and ever.'[141]

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[138] *Common Worship*, 196.

[139] The Church in Wales, *An Order for the Holy Eucharist* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), 56. See also Maxwell E. Johnson, 'The Holy Spirit and Lutheran liturgical–sacramental worship', in *Spirit in Worship*, 155–77.

[140] *Common Worship*, 195.

[141] *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1994), 136.

A combined epiclesis after the words of institution, over both the elements and the people, comprises the third category of eucharistic prayer. In historical perspective, this is characteristic of the 'Antiochene' or West Syrian pattern. This structure implies that the words themselves effect no change in the elements, but that the action of the Spirit does, whether objectively, or from the subjective viewpoint of the communicant, or both. This is the standard form of epiclesis in the 1999 *Methodist Worship Book*, which is used in Britain. In the prayers for several different seasons, following the words of institution comes the petition:

> Send your Holy Spirit
> that these gifts of bread and wine
> may be for us the body and blood of Christ.[142]

The Spirit is here called down upon both the elements and the people. This dual reference is facilitated by a deliberate ambiguity of reference, which is the crucial difference with the second category of epiclesis, which asks straightforwardly that the Spirit be sent upon 'us'. This type of epiclesis may also be found in *Common Worship* Prayers F, G, and H, and is the standard form of prayer used by the Church in Wales. It is also the norm in *Scottish Liturgy 1982*, used in the Scottish Episcopal Church, in which the priest prays:

> Hear us, most merciful Father,
> and send your Holy Spirit upon us
> and upon this bread and this wine,
> that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,
> they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,
> and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
> and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.[143]

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[142] *The Methodist Worship Book* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999), 138, 155, 171, 194.

[143] *Scottish Liturgy 1982 with Alternative Eucharistic Prayers* (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1982), 11, 13, 15, 17.

This form of epiclesis may be traced back to the fourth century liturgies of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil. It corresponds well with the classic order of doctrinal exposition in the Nicene Creed, in which the work of the Spirit is presented third, following the work of the Father and the Son. Indeed, in the eucharistic prayer it would be possible to demarcate the corresponding spheres of reference quite clearly. First, the Father is given glory for his work of creation and for sending his Son into the world, then the Son himself is made present in the words and actions of the institution narrative. Then, the Spirit sanctifies and completes all that has come before.[144] It is, of course, important to recognize that the work of the divine persons cannot ultimately be separated, and that in the work of one is implicit the work of others. Nevertheless, from an expository viewpoint the pattern has much to commend it.

The fourth and final category of epiclesis is the double epiclesis. This is the defining feature of eucharistic prayers of the 'Alexandrian' type, and has become the norm for Roman Catholic eucharistic prayers since 1970. In this schema, a first epiclesis, over the gifts, and before the words of institution, is followed by a second epiclesis, over the people, following those words. Prayer II of the 2002 Roman Missal, for example, evokes the sending of the manna to the Israelites in the wilderness for collection at dawn. Before the words of institution, the Father is asked:

> Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
> by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,
> so that they may become for us
> the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.[145]

After the words of institution, the petition is made:

> Humbly we pray
> that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,
> we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.[146]

[144] McKenna, *Eucharist*, 207.

[145] *Roman Missal*, 646.

[146] *Roman Missal*, 648.

The gifts are here transformed by the action of the Spirit, and the Spirit is then invoked over the people. The second epiclesis might be regarded as superfluous, or as establishing an inappropriately 'split' epiclesis.[147] Alternatively, and more favourably, it may be viewed as part of a liturgical re-enactment of salvation history, in which, as discussed in chapter 5.4, there were two major epicleses: the first, in all four Gospels, on Christ at his baptism, and the second, in Acts 2, upon the Church at Pentecost. The double epiclesis also serves as a reminder that the work of the Spirit encompasses the work of the Son, rather than being subordinate. For these two reasons, the double epiclesis makes theological sense. It is also found in Prayers A and B of the Church of England's *Common Worship*, and in Eucharistic Prayers 3 and 7 of the Church in Wales's *Order for the Holy Eucharist 2004*.[148]

In the four categories presented so far, one or two epicleses have been located relative to the words of institution. However, in the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order* of 1994, as in the previous editions of 1940 and 1979, the thanksgiving contains no such words. Instead, the prayer is preceded with the reading of the verses from 1 Corinthians 11 that narrate the origins of the Lord's Supper.[149] This is a straightforward biblical reading and nothing more. After the reading, the minister takes the bread and wine 'to be set apart from all common uses to this holy use and mystery', and the thanksgiving begins. In three of the four possible options, striking epicleses appear. In option a of the First Order, the minister, addressing the Father, prays:

> Send down your Holy Spirit
> to bless us
> and these your gifts of bread and wine,
> that the bread which we break
> may be for us the communion
> of the body of Christ,
> and the cup of blessing which we bless
> the communion of the blood of Christ.

[147] McKenna, *Eucharist*, 207.

[148] *Common Worship*, 184–90; Church in Wales, *Order*, 48–52, 70–4.

[149] 1 Cor. 11. 23-6.

In option c, an even bolder petition is encountered that encompasses the whole created order. The minister prays:

> Send your Holy Spirit upon us
> and upon this bread and wine
> that we who eat and drink at this holy table
> may share the life of Christ our Lord.
> Pour out your Spirit upon the whole earth
> and bring in your new creation.

Finally, in the Second Order, the minister evokes the image of the people as Christ's holy body, praying:

> Send down your Holy Spirit on us
> and on these gifts of bread and wine;
> that they may become for us
> the body and blood of your most dear Son,
> and that we may become for you his living body,
> loving and caring for the world
> until the dawning of the perfect day.

These epicleses read similarly to those in the Anglican *Scottish Liturgy 1982*. However, it must be remembered that they lack words of institution. Considerable theological weight is therefore placed upon the epiclesis, as in the prayers of Addai and Mari, and of Theodore, which were discussed in chapter 5.4. In the Reformed theological context, there is a legitimate concern to recognize the world and all the things in it for what they are, rather than as gaining significance by becoming something else. This concern extends to the humanity of Christ and to the elements that represent his body. As Thomas Torrance powerfully argued, in a cautionary intervention against Apollinarian tendencies in worship, if Christians can pray at all, this is only because they have, for an example, Christ praying alongside them, who

sanctifies ordinary life rather than changing it into something different.[150] This convinced belief in Christ's humanity is accompanied by an equally strong pneumatology. The prayers reflect a view of the Spirit as God's 'strong second hand': not the immanent possession of Jesus Christ, which is familiar in the Western tradition proceeding from Augustine, but God's free, life-giving activity, which maintains and empowers the human activity of the incarnate Son. According to this model, the Spirit holds Christ's divine and human natures together in a meaningful unity-in-distinction.[151] Some rapprochement is here evident with Roman Catholic eucharistic theology. The Final Report of the 1970–7 dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Roman Catholic Church recognized that the Spirit, sent down by the Father in response to the Church's call, sanctifies both the bread and wine, and the worshipping people.[152] The Report also affirmed that it is possible to 'apprehend to a certain extent' the nature of Christ's eucharistic presence through the Spirit, by comparing this with the Spirit's work in the incarnation and resurrection.

Over the past century, the theological and ecclesial contexts of eucharistic epicleses have been transformed. Within the Church of England, the epiclesis was a key topic of controversy in the debates surrounding Prayer Book revision that occurred in the early twentieth century, being seen as supporting a strong doctrine of Christ's material presence in the eucharistic elements. By the 1970s, however, there was no significant opposition to the inclusion of an epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer.[153] Why this shift? At least part of the explanation lies in the rise of charismatic evangelicalism within Anglicanism. As early as the 1960s, charismatics recognized that the Spirit often acted in a eucharistic setting. As Christopher Cocksworth has observed, however, 'little attempt has been made systematically

[150] Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (London: Chapman, 1975), 139–214.

[151] Paul Cumin, 'The taste of cake: relation and otherness with Colin Gunton and the strong second hand of God', in *The Theology of Colin Gunton*, ed. Lincoln Harvey (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 65–85.

[152] *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* 82 (Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, 1977).

[153] David J. Kennedy, *Eucharistic Sacramentality in an Ecumenical Context: The Anglican Epiclesis* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 101–37, 152–3.

to relate the two in either theology or practice'.[154] There is unfinished business here for ecumenical eucharistic theology. The historic churches need to remain alert to their tendency to sideline the role of the Spirit in their eucharistic prayers and in the theologies that follow from these. Pentecostal churches need, for their part, to articulate theologically what has undoubtedly been observed in experience: that the Spirit's free activity is frequently manifested in the Eucharist, perhaps even in the way that it was anciently believed to have been manifested, by transforming the elements and the people in generous response to prayer. From this perspective, the whole liturgy may be regarded as an epiclesis that is made more explicit at particular moments.[155]

5.6. Conclusion: Eucharistic Resurrection

In recent scholarship, medievalists have devoted much attention to the place of relics in the lives of Christians. Motivating factors have included a well-founded interest in material culture and the body as categories of analysis. Among medievalists, relics are typically viewed as mobile sources of spiritual power and healing, rather than as bodies or parts of bodies awaiting a resurrection that is eucharistic.[156] Moreover, the Eucharist is often regarded not as an act of worship taking place at an altar in a church but, analogously to a relic, as a material source of paraliturgical power that is primarily manifested in processions and blessings. These, so it is argued, meant far more to laypeople than the formal Eucharist celebrated in churches, from which they had become excluded. Charles Freeman even views the host, in so far as it is significant, as a species of relic.[157] Essentially accepting this

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[154] Christopher J. Cocksworth, *Evangelical Eucharistic Thought in the Church of England* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 160.

[155] *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* II.5.c (Joint International Commission for Roman Catholic–Lutheran Dialogue, 1982).

[156] Examples include Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2011); *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, eds Martina Bagnoli et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2011); Scott B. Montgomery, *St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne: Relics, Reliquaries and the Visual Culture of Group Sanctity in Late Medieval Europe* (Bern: Lang, 2010); Henk van Os et al., *The Way to Heaven: Relic Veneration in the Middle Ages* (Baarn: de Prom, 2000).

[157] Freeman, *Holy Bones,* 195–6, 267.

classification, Godefridus Snoek has argued that the Eucharist was the 'unique relic'. This is on the grounds that the Eucharist and relics have had parallel applications, that forms of reverence to one have been transposed onto the other, and that each has been believed to possess miraculous powers.[158]

In this chapter, although it has been accepted that the Eucharist and relics exist in relation, it has been argued, on both historical and theological grounds, that the power of relics was originally understood to be derived from the power of the Eucharist, rather than the reverse. Relics, being the bodies of the dead, awaited the resurrection that the Eucharist anticipates, just like other bodies. In ancient Christian practice, the Eucharist was celebrated at gravesides not in order to acquire a validity or power that it would otherwise lack, but in order that the person who had died might be lifted into resurrection life. In time, churches were constructed upon some of these sites. In other instances, the remains of martyrs were translated into churches that already existed. Many more martyr graves were thereby retrospectively established, as the souls of the dead, along with their still living friends, gathered around the altar to await their resurrection.

The arguments presented in this chapter also have significant pastoral implications. Reception of the eucharistic elements as viaticum is a central part of ministry to the dying, and the viaticum has been administered by laypeople as well as by clergy. Because they open natural, as well as theological, associations with death and rebirth, the elements may be received at death by those who are not regular churchgoers as well as, on historical precedent, by those who would not receive communion in church. However, a full celebration of the Eucharist is also possible. Following death, the powerful association with resurrection that the Eucharist establishes suggests the potentially great value of a Funeral Eucharist for both the living and the departed. In any case, the location of the coffin in relation to the altar and reserved sacrament should be given careful thought. Remains that have been cremated might be placed close to the altar while the Eucharist is celebrated, although the embodied nature of resurrection suggests that full body burial should be given careful consideration. A graveside Eucharist sometime after burial might also have pastoral value.

The resurrection that all await will be gained in the power of the Spirit. The life and mission of Christ are inseparable from the work of the Spirit, and in any case, a theology in which the Eucharist is central cannot justifiably associate it with the work of only one divine

[158] Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 333–80.

person. Moreover, just as the doctrine of creation associates the Eucharist pre-eminently with the Father, and the doctrines of incarnation and reconciliation foreground the work of the Son, so the doctrine of the resurrection brings into sharpest focus the work of the Spirit. In eucharistic prayers, the work of the Spirit has been understood through multiple biblical and doctrinal images, including creation, annunciation, incarnation, baptism, and resurrection. This eucharistic pneumatology presents to liturgists both challenge and promise, suggesting that the Eucharist is as much the work of the Spirit as the work of Christ.